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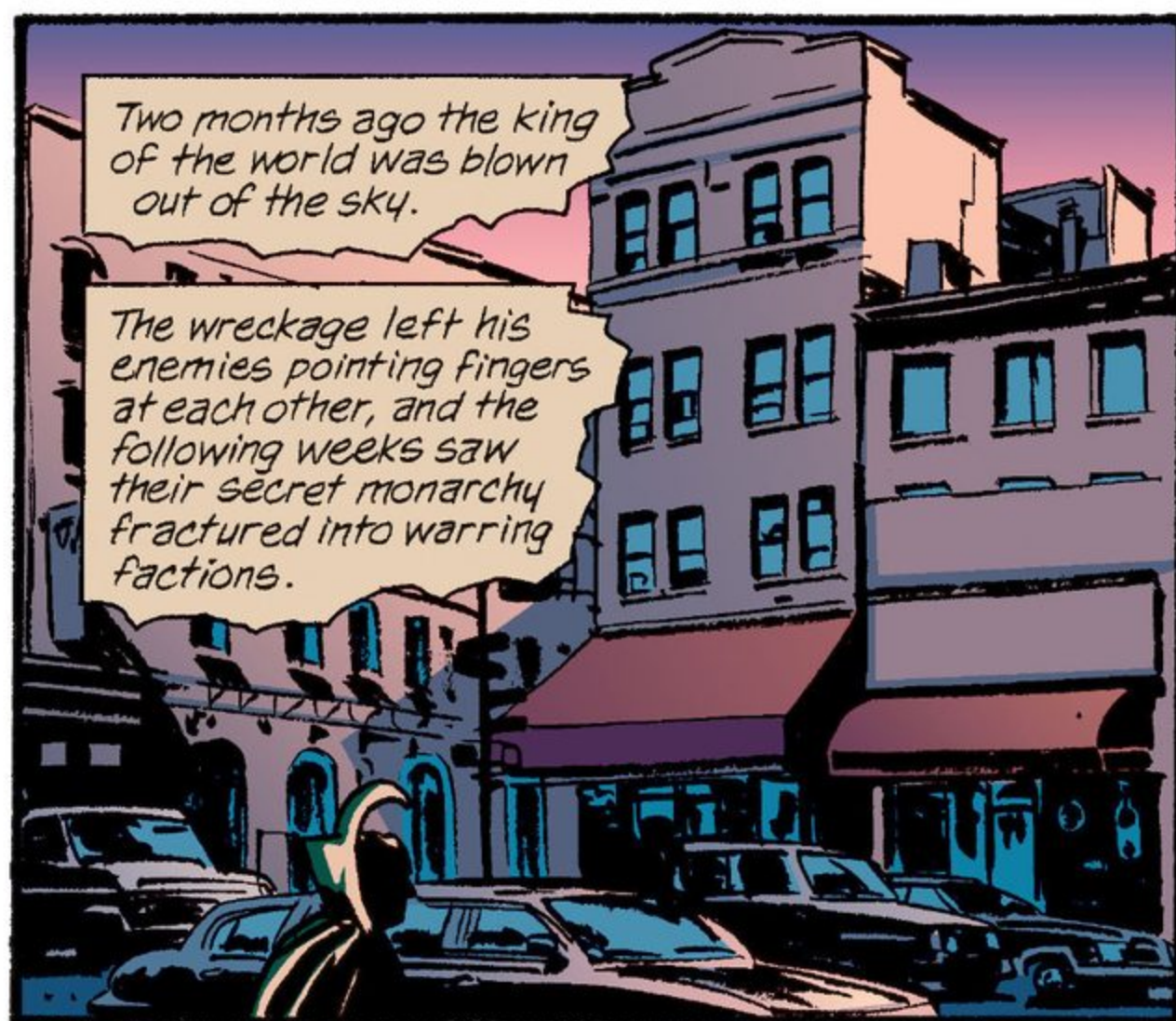
#5
JUL

Sean
2002

SUGGESTED
FOR MATURE
READERS

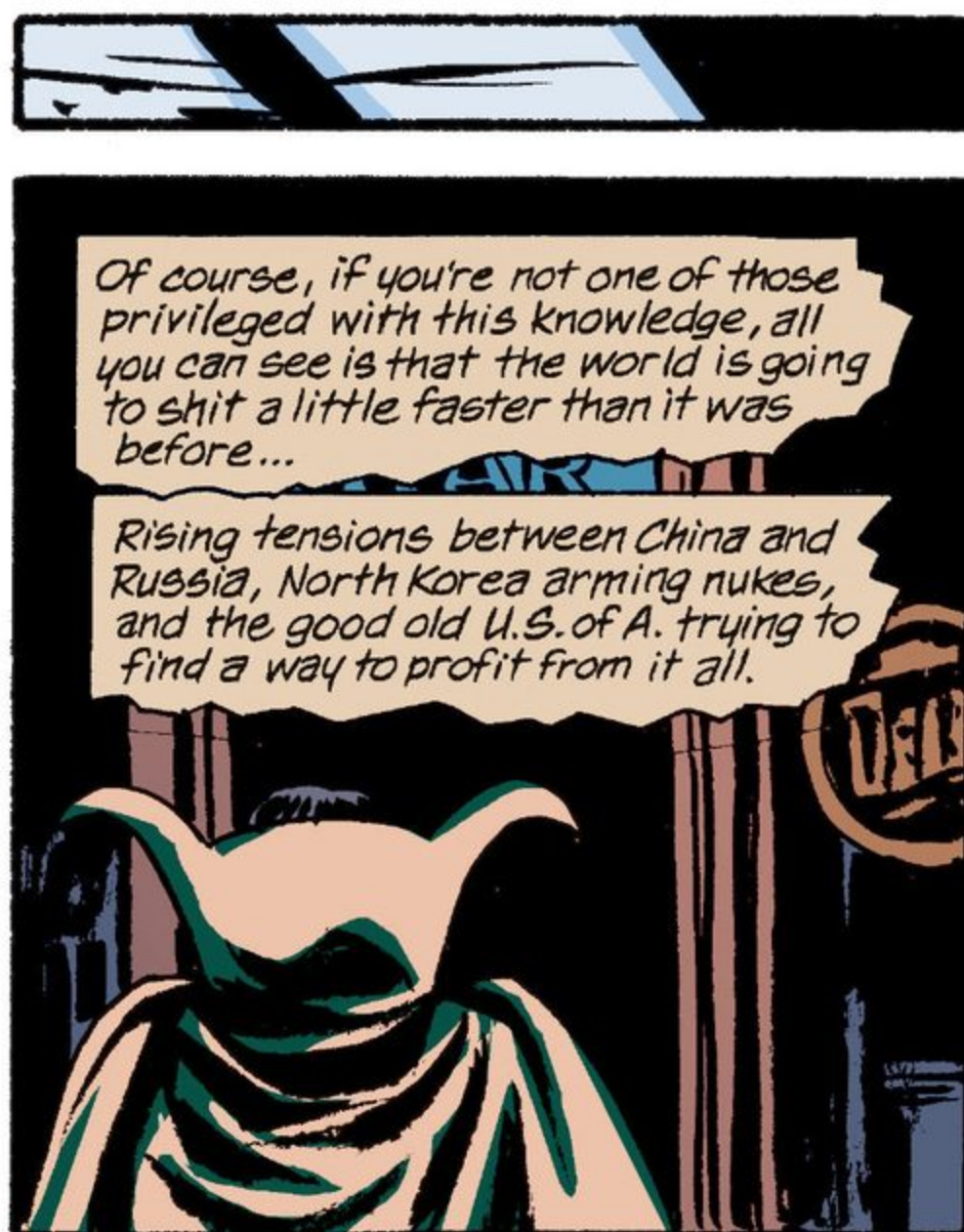
WILDSTORM.COM





Two months ago the king of the world was blown out of the sky.

The wreckage left his enemies pointing fingers at each other, and the following weeks saw their secret monarchy fractured into warring factions.



Of course, if you're not one of those privileged with this knowledge, all you can see is that the world is going to shit a little faster than it was before...

Rising tensions between China and Russia, North Korea arming nukes, and the good old U.S. of A. trying to find a way to profit from it all.



My boss, Tao, calls it the New World Chaos.

Then he laughs really hard.



Me, I'm not laughing. Because I can't remember the last time anything seemed funny...

-- THAT COMIC STRIP, WITH THE KID AND HIS TALKING TEDDY BEAR?

MARVIN AND TEDDY?



YEAH, THAT SHIT WAS FUNNIER THAN FUCK, Y'KNOW?

BUT THE GUY THAT DID THAT STRIP, HE TOTALLY BLEW IT. COULDA MADE SO MUCH MONEY IF HE DID, LIKE, TV SPECIALS AND SHIRTS AND CRAP...

BUT WHAT DOES HE DO? HE FUCKIN' QUILTS TO KEEP HIS LITTLE COMIC STRIP PURE.

WHAT A SCHMUCK.

HE WAS ALREADY A MILLIONAIRE, PROBABLY TEN TIMES OVER...

SO WHAT? C'MON, HOLDEN, HIM AND THAT SYNDICATE COULDA BEEN ROLLIN' IN IT...

I DON'T KNOW, MAX, HE WAS DOING EXACTLY WHAT HE WANTED, AND HE WAS RICHER THAN NEARLY EVERYONE ON THE PLANET... MAYBE THAT WAS ENOUGH FOR HIM.

ENOUGH... PFFFFTTT--

THAT'S WHAT I'M TALKIN' ABOUT, THERE'S--

Diesel Max keeps yammering, but I'm not paying attention. My brain is still stuck on last night...

THAT MUST'VE BEEN SOME DREAM, HOLDEN... YOU WERE POSITIVELY AGITATED.

... REALLY?

YEAH, YOU KEPT SAYING, "MARTINEZ, GET AWAY FROM ME..." AND THINGS LIKE THAT...

WHO'S MARTINEZ?



SOMEONE I
KILLED A LONG
TIME AGO.



OH, POOR HOLDEN...
YOU'RE NOT HAUNTED,
ARE YOU?

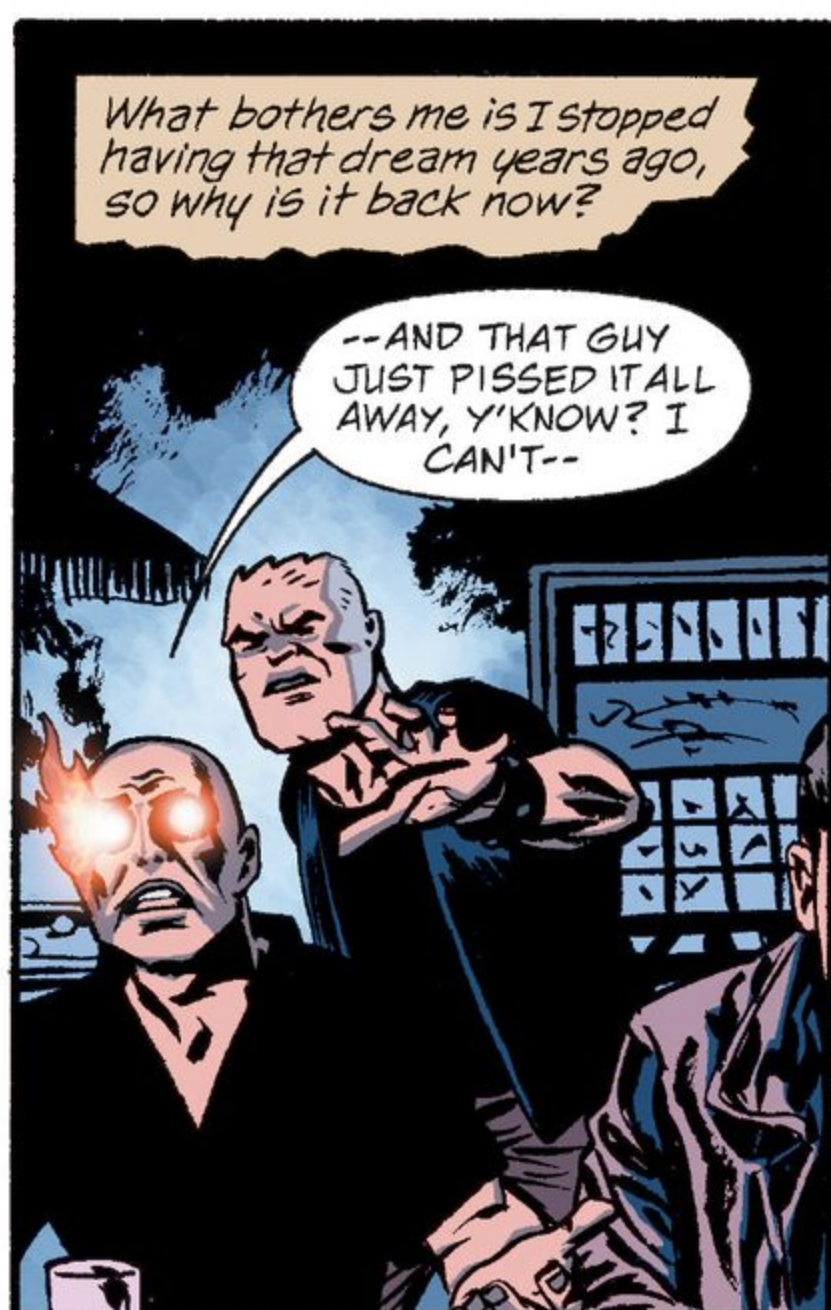
YOU PROBABLY GAVE
ME BAD DREAMS, IS
ALL.



YOU WOULDN'T
BE THE FIRST.

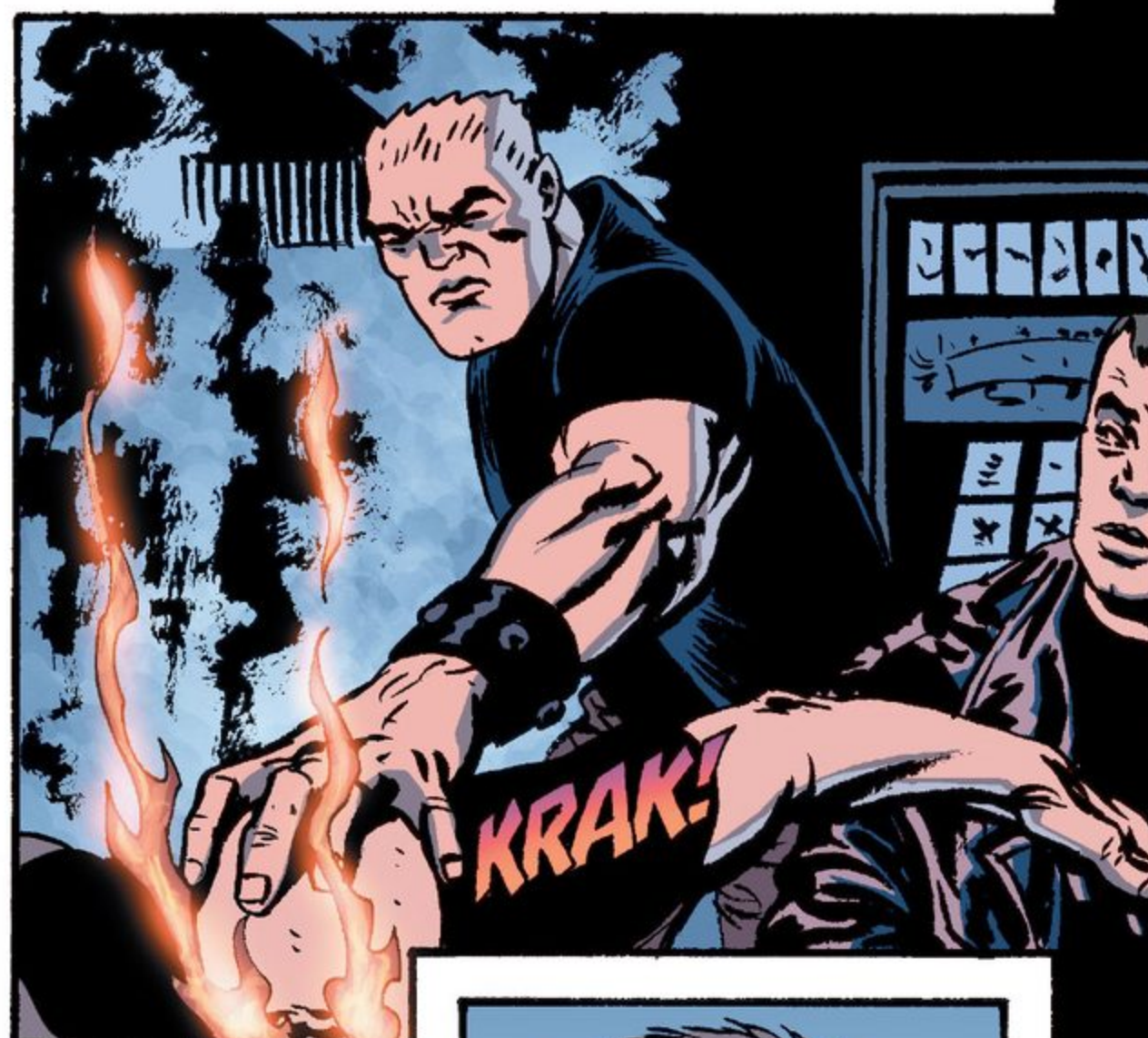


Carlos Martinez was Second
in Command in my I.O. Black
Ops unit. But that's not
what bothers me...



What bothers me is I stopped
having that dream years ago,
so why is it back now?

--AND THAT GUY
JUST PISSED IT ALL
AWAY, Y'KNOW? I
CAN'T--



I AM SO TIRED OF
HEARING HIM WHINE
ABOUT THAT FUCKING
COMIC STRIP.

HE'S GONNA
BE PISSED WHEN
HE COMES TO,
GENOCIDE...



FUCK HIM.

WHAT'S HE
GONNA DO, SINCE
MY EYEBROWS?



HEY,
YOU SEE
THIS
YET?

--REPORTS TODAY THAT
BERLIN LITERALLY
DISAPPEARED, APPAR-
ENTLY SUCKED INTO
ANOTHER DIMENSION.



THANKS TO THE INTERVENTION OF
WORLD FAMOUS SUPER-TEAM, THE
AUTHORITY, THOUGH, THE CITY WAS
RETURNED TO ITS RIGHTFUL PLACE
IN LESS THAN AN HOUR...



THOSE BASTARDS...
ALWAYS FUCKIN' UP
A LOT OF HARD
WORK.



HEY, THAT
BERLIN THING
WASN'T ONE OF
OURS, WAS
IT?

NO. NOT REALLY.
MORE LIKE A
DEMONSTRATION FOR
TAO'S BENEFIT.



IN LOCAL NEWS, A BANK ROBBERY WAS
AVERTED WITH THE ASSISTANCE OF
TURBINE, THE HERO WHO ROCKETED TO
FAME EARLY LAST YEAR WHEN--

CLICK



THANKS, MIKE. I
HEAR ANYMORE
ABOUT FUCKING
SUPERHEROES
TODAY AND I'M
GONNA TEAR THIS
PLACE A NEW
ASSHOLE.

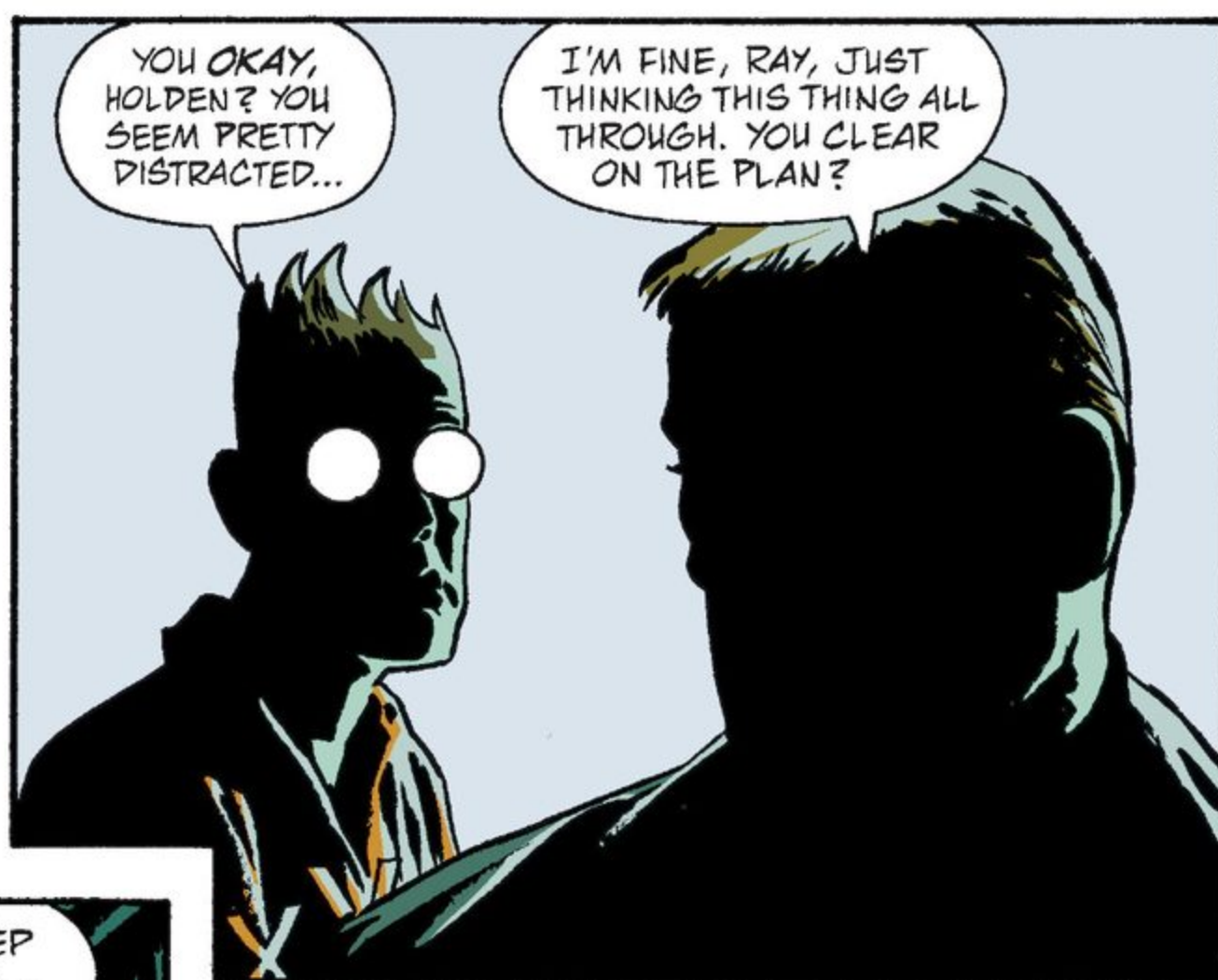
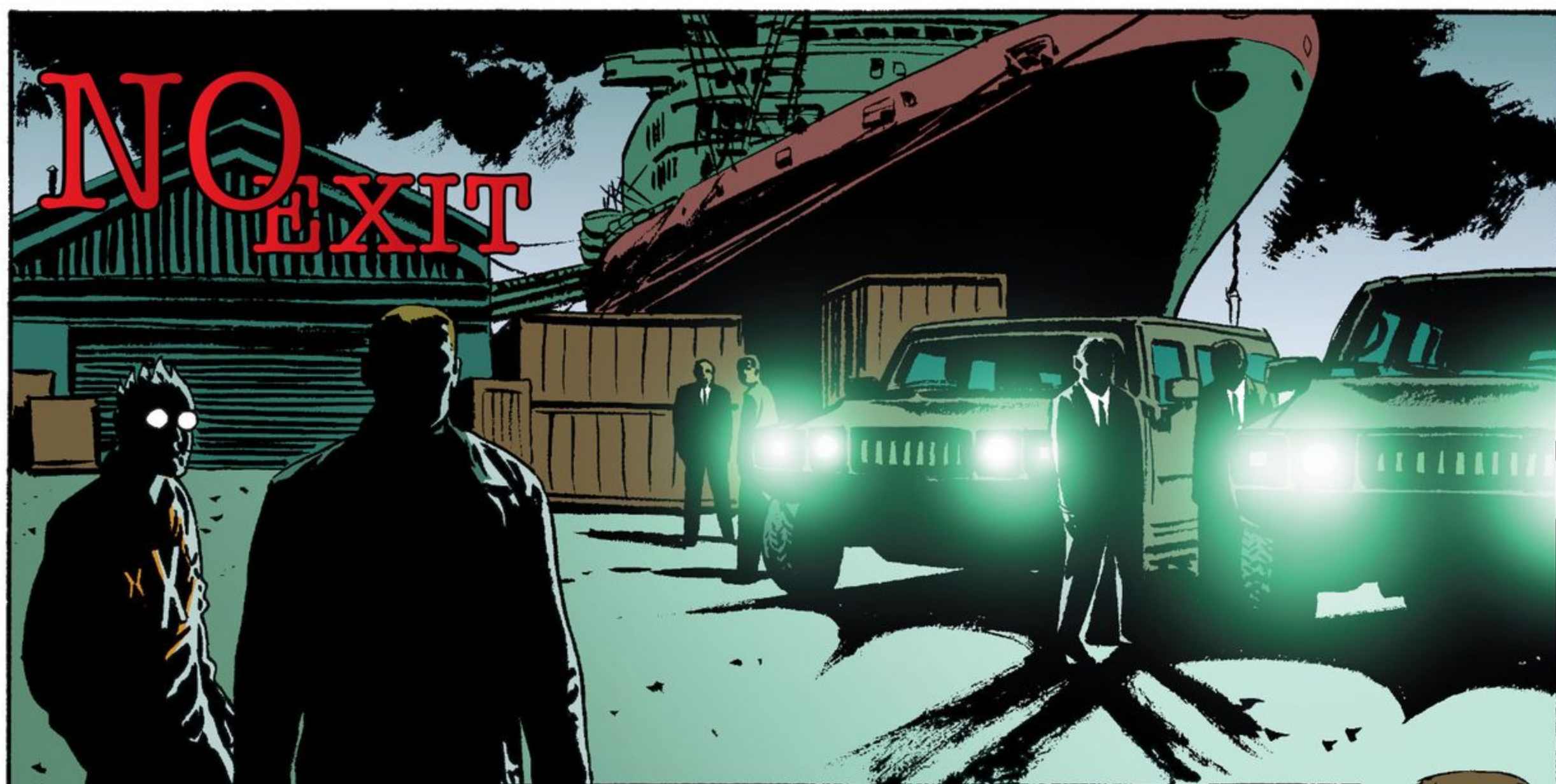
WHY'D YOU THINK I TURNED
IT OFF, GENOCIDE? I JUST
BOUGHT THAT SET LAST
WEEK.



HOLDEN,
CHECK IT OUT,
HE SHOWED
UP...



NO EXIT





MISTER CARVER, I PRESUME...?



I'M ANTON GREEVA. YOU ARE EXPECTING ME, YES?



YES.

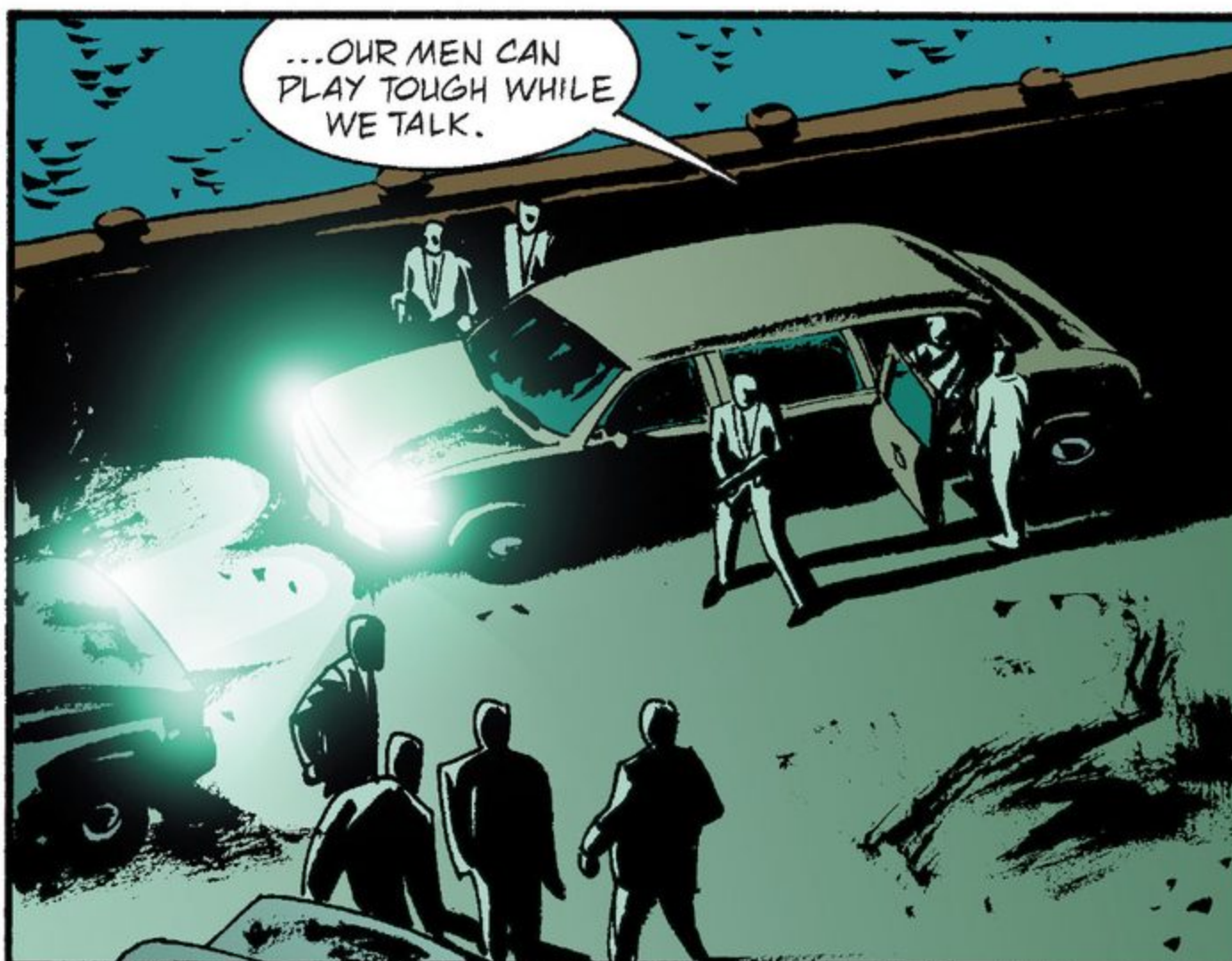


I REGRET SUCH FORMALITIES, BUT... SAFETY MUST COME FIRST.

NOT A PROBLEM, I'M NOT ARMED TONIGHT.



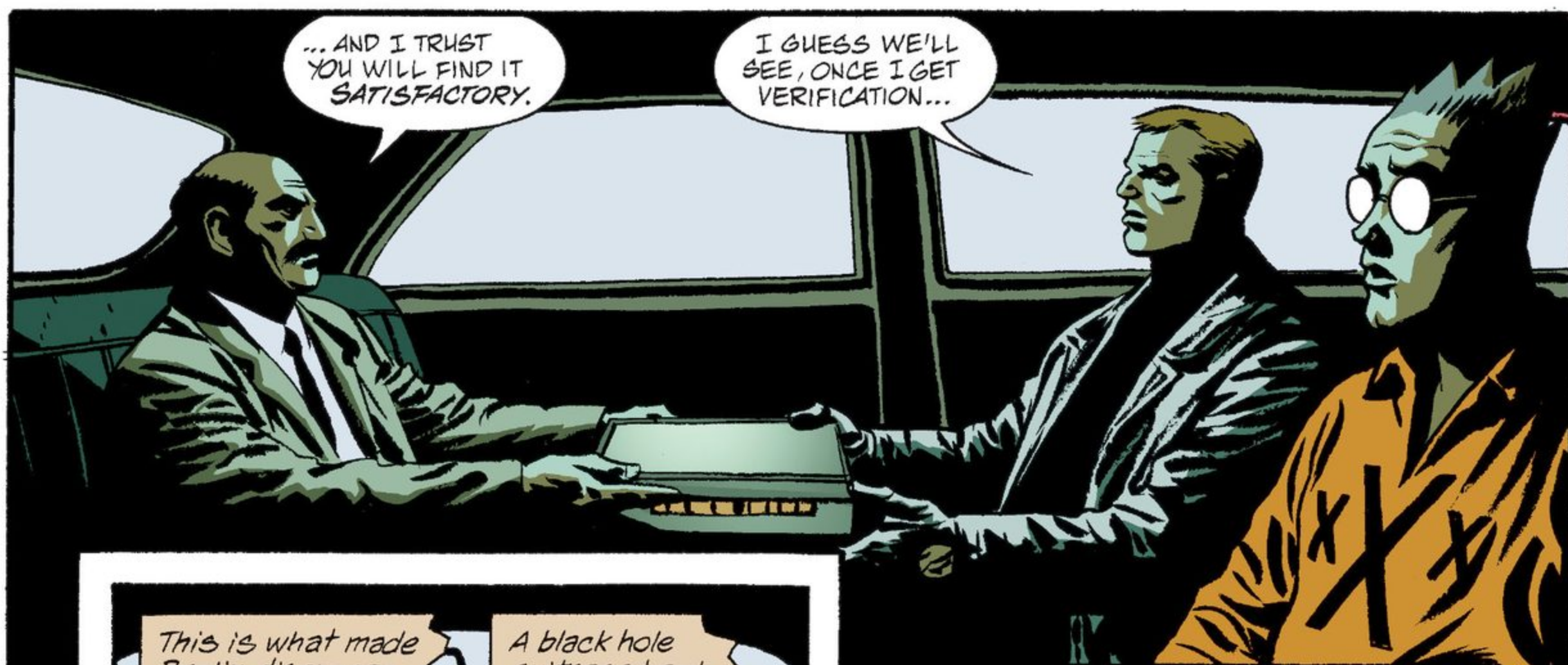
THEN PLEASE, LET US GET TO BUSINESS...



...OUR MEN CAN PLAY TOUGH WHILE WE TALK.



THIS IS THE WEAPON YOU HAVE COME FOR...



... AND I TRUST YOU WILL FIND IT SATISFACTORY.

I GUESS WE'LL SEE, ONCE I GET VERIFICATION...



This is what made Berlin disappear this afternoon.

A black hole suitcase bomb.



Developed with alien technology in a lab in Norway, it's a new dimension in terrorism. Open it up, and say goodbye to everything around you.

OH MY GOD... IT'S-- IT'S--



OKAY, RAY, STOP...



SO, WE ARE ON THE UP AND UP, THEN?

SURE, JUST TELL ME HOW TO DISARM IT AND I'LL MAKE THE CALL.

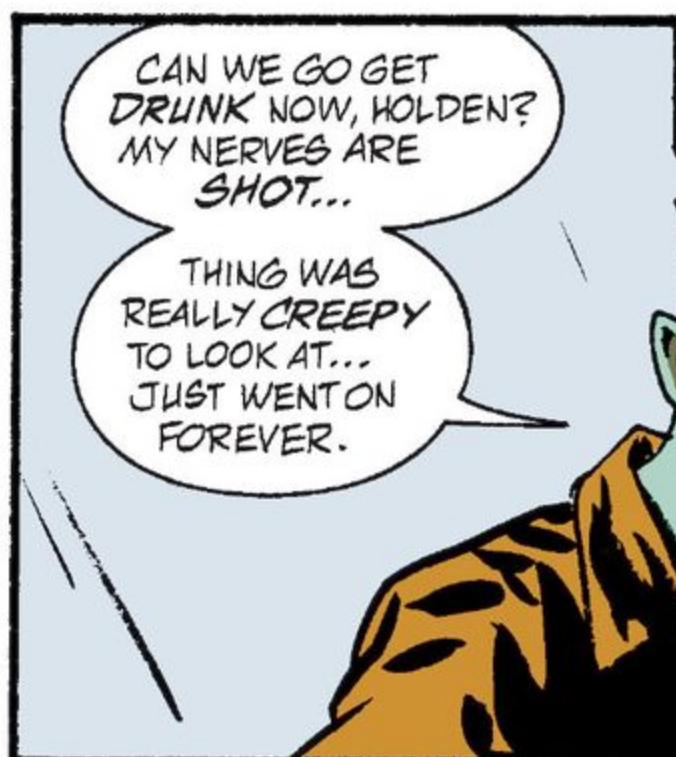


A SIMPLE SET OF SWITCHES AND NUMBERS ON THE SIDE.

YOU TURN THIS, AND CHANGE THESE TO ZERO... THEN IT IS SAFE TO OPEN...



BUT ONCE OPENED, YOU CAN NEVER USE IT AGAIN.





Ray was right about me being distracted, which means I need to be more careful.



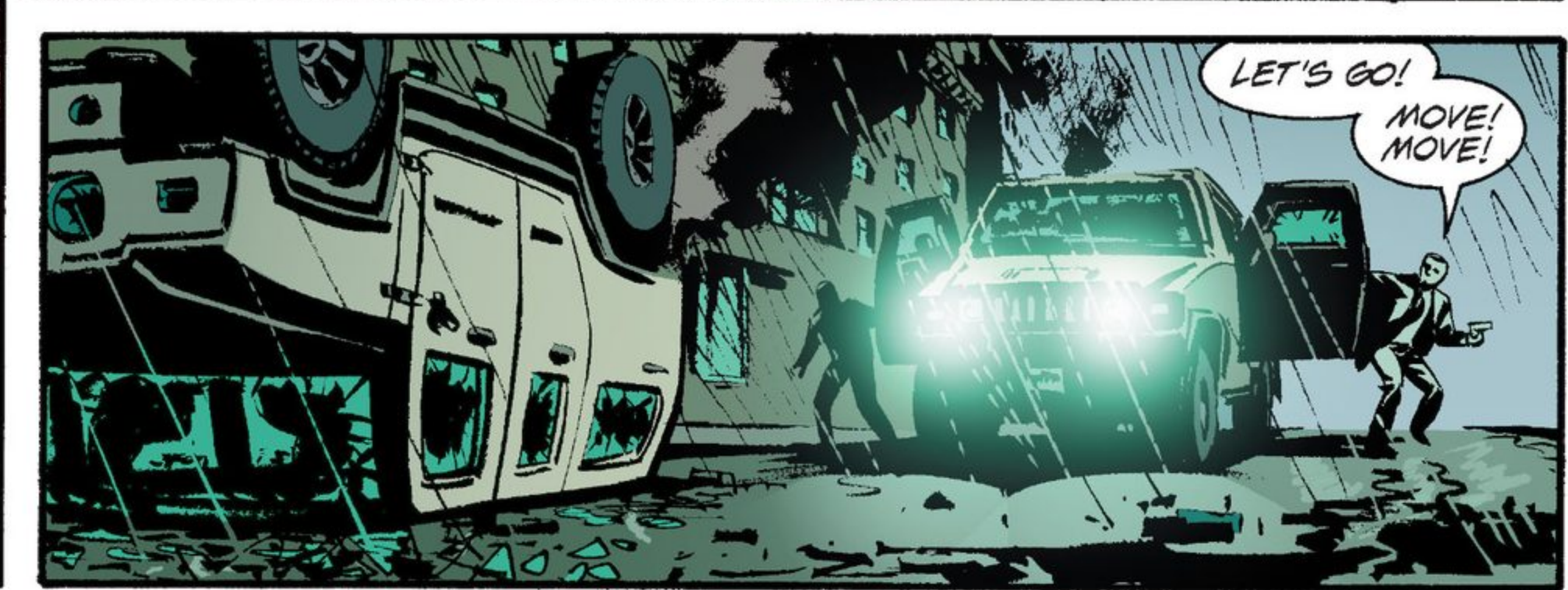
So I make sure to have an extra good time with him and Genocide for the rest of the night...

We're just three old friends catching up. Raising hell.



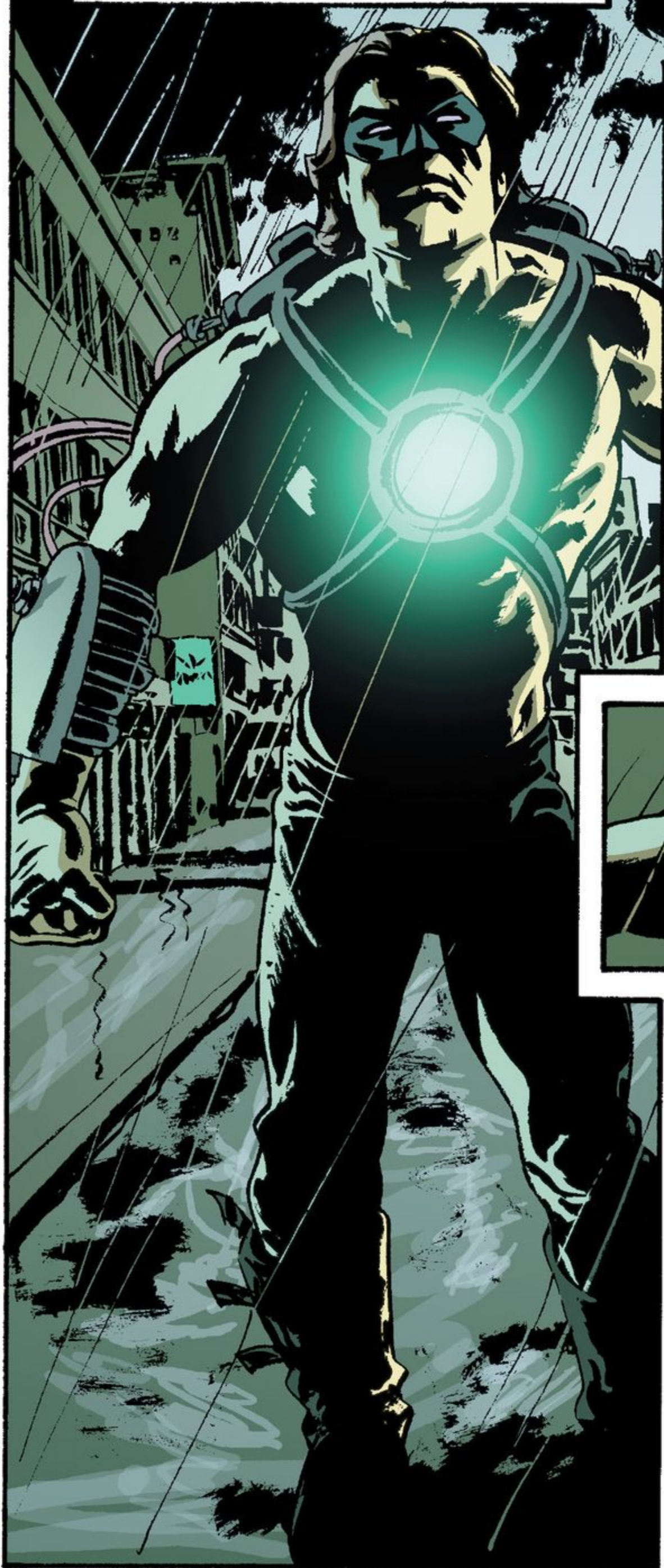
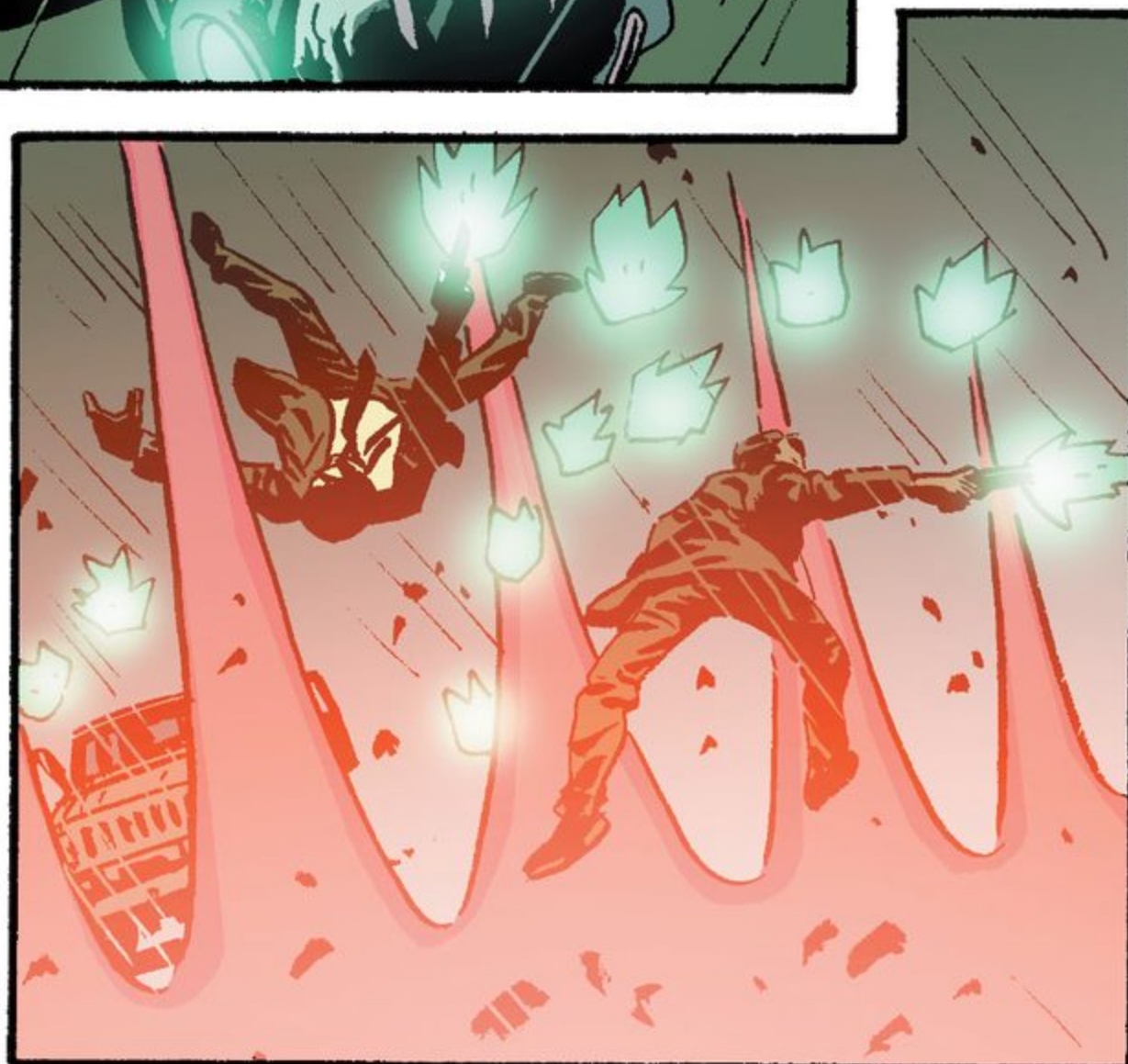
Because no one can suspect what I have planned...

OH, SHIT--

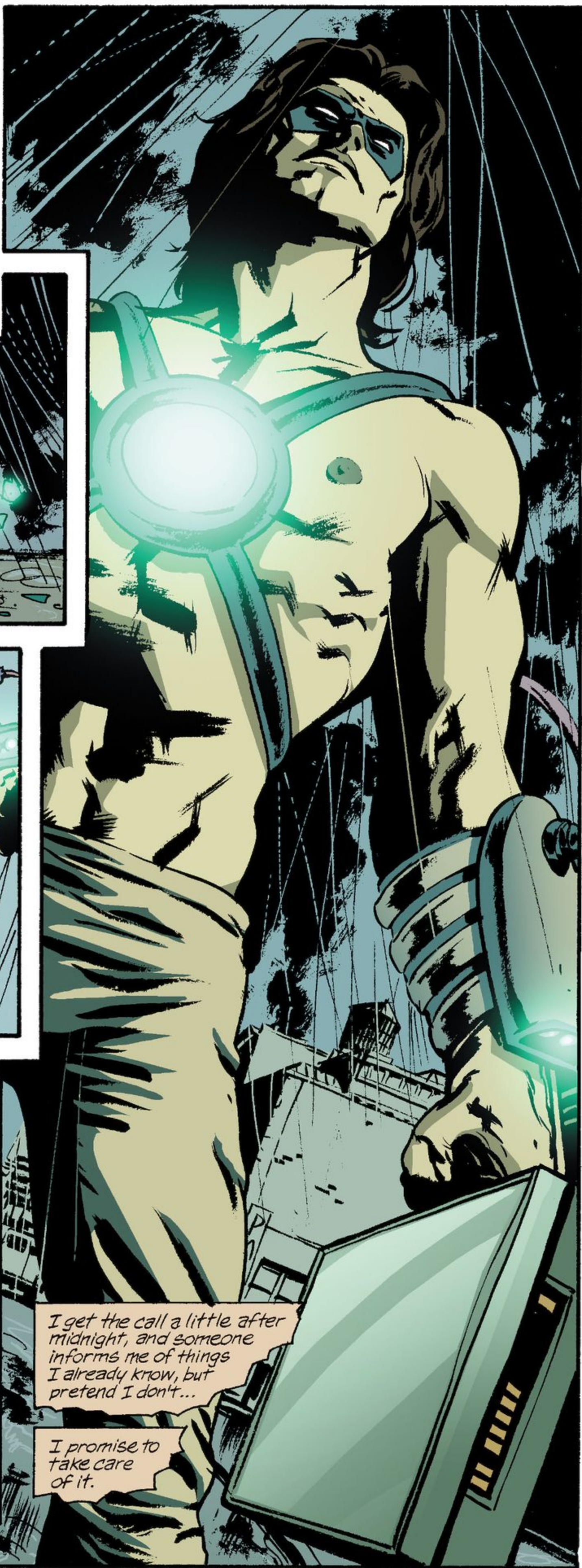


LET'S GO!

MOVE!
MOVE!







I get the call a little after midnight, and someone informs me of things I already know, but pretend I don't...

I promise to take care of it.

And, in a way,
I guess I do...

SORRY TO JUST SHOW UP LIKE
THIS, BUT I DIDN'T THINK YOU'D
BUZZ ME IN.

AND I HAD TO
DISABLE ALL YOUR
SURVEILLANCE, TOO.

YOU'RE
FUCKING
DEAD.

I WOULDN'T DO
THAT. YOU'RE
GOING TO NEED
ME TO **DISARM**
THAT THING.

AND AREN'T
YOU AT LEAST
CURIOUS WHY I
TIPPED YOU OFF
TONIGHT?

YOU...?

WHIRRR-CLK

HO
CAN
ROGUE AGE

HOLDEN CARVER-- WHY WOULD A TRAITOR LEAK INTEL TO ME?



BECAUSE I'M NOT A TRAITOR.

I'M DEEP COVER. A DOUBLE AGENT.



BULLSHIT. I JUST ACCESSED EVERY GOVERNMENT DATABASE IN THE WORLD AND THERE'S NOTHING CONFIRMING THAT.



LOOK--YOU THINK THE PEOPLE I DEAL WITH DON'T HAVE ACCESS TO THOSE SAME NETWORKS?!

HOW LONG WOULD I LAST IF IT DIDN'T LOOK REAL?



OKAY, SO WHY COME TO ME? I'M NOT WITH THE U.N. OR ANY OTHER ORGANIZATION ANYMORE...

A FEW REASONS. MAINLY, BECAUSE YOU'VE WORKED UNDER MY CONTACT, JOHN LYNCH.



LYNCH IS IN A COMA.



YOU THINK I DON'T KNOW THAT?



LOOK--FOR THE LAST EIGHT MONTHS I'VE HAD **NO** CONTACT. NO ONE WHO KNOWS WHICH SIDE I'M **REALLY** ON...

AND I DON'T KNOW IF LYNCH WILL EVEN **REMEMBER ME** IF HE EVER WAKES UP...

SO, I'M TRAPPED IN A PLACE **HE** PUT ME, AND I DON'T KNOW HOW TO GET OUT.

I NEED A **NEW** CONTACT. I HAVE TO FEEL LIKE I'M **HELPING**, OTHERWISE I'M JUST-- I'M **NOTHING** BUT WHAT EVERYONE **THINKS** I AM...

AND I CAN'T JUST BE THE THINGS I'VE HAD TO DO TO SURVIVE. I HAVE TO BE SOMETHING ELSE, TOO...

WELL, THIS **DOES** SOUND LIKE THE KIND OF **FUCKED-UP SHIT** LYNCH WOULD PULL...

...THE **PROBLEM** IS, EVEN IF I BELIEVED YOU--AND I **DON'T**--

--I HAVE TO **AT LEAST** BRING YOU IN FOR **QUESTIONING**.

RIGHT, AND THEN I SPEND THE REST OF MY LIFE IN A **CELL**. I'LL PASS...

IT WASN'T A **REQUEST**!

SKKRASSHH





Scen 2003



WHY
WOULDN'T
YOU
LISTEN?



WHAT THE
FUCK ARE
YOU?

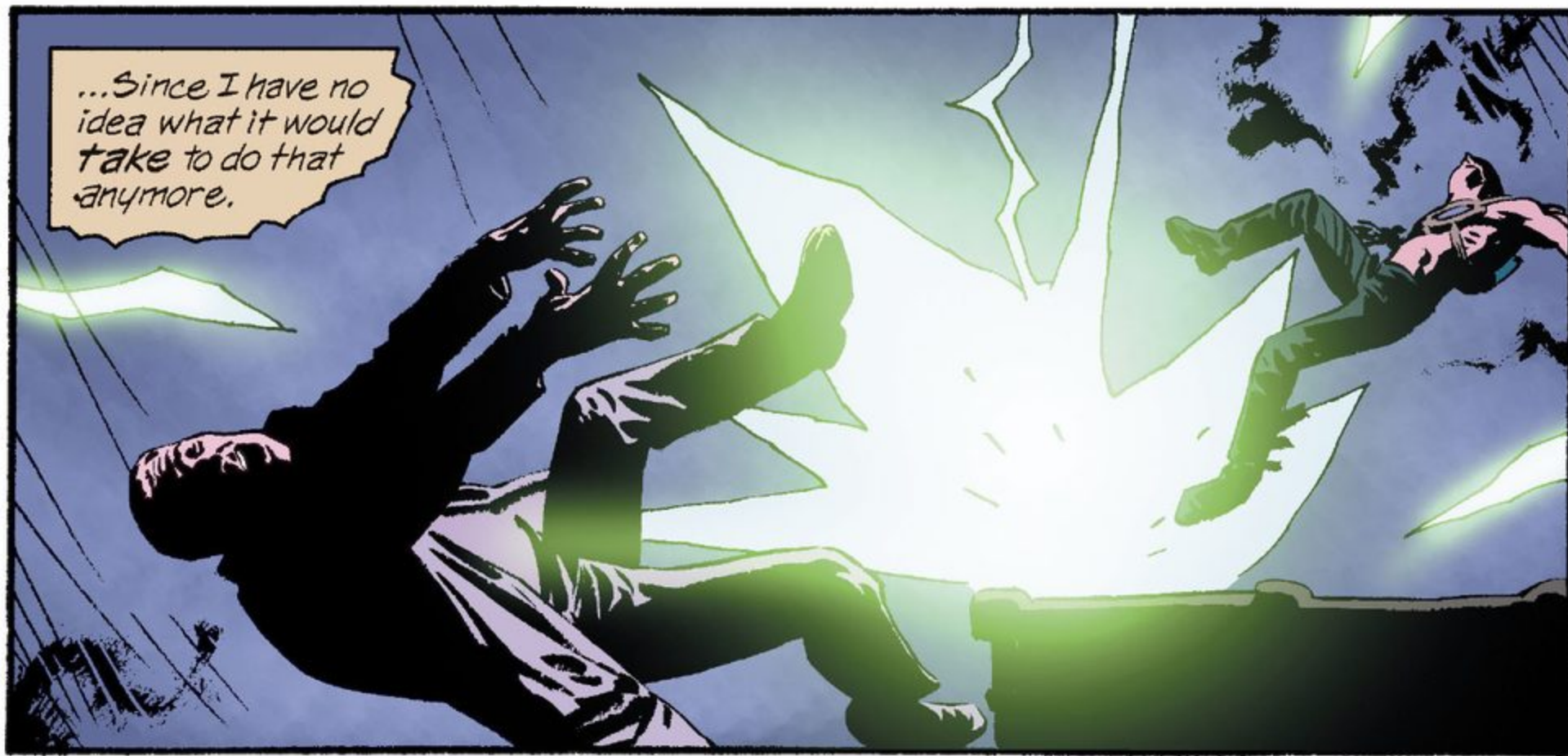
I said there
was more
than one
reason I
had picked
Turbine...



...The second one was that
if he didn't believe me, I
knew he wasn't so powerful
that I couldn't kill him...



...And I seriously
doubted he could
kill me...



...Since I have no idea what it would take to do that anymore.



Because even this doesn't hurt.



Broken legs, fractured spine, who knows what kind of internal injuries? And I can already feel my bones working themselves back together.

I'll be walking out of here in half an hour...



Hell, the only time I can even remember pain is in my dreams...





'Like last night... My old dream about Martinez and the others.



That was the last time I really felt anything.



When that artifact fell out of the Bleed and destroyed whatever it touched...



...And then made me destroy everything I cared about.



I couldn't move then, either, but still it left me alive...



...With so much damn blood on my hands that I'll never be able to wash it away...

...And no idea how to make it stop.

Why couldn't Turbine
have just listened
to me?



No. Keep walking,
lady... Don't --

OH MY GOD...
ARE YOU--JESUS
CHRIST...

CAN
YOU HEAR
ME?

...DON'T...
TOUCH ME...
DON'T...

YOU'RE GOING TO
BE OKAY, I'VE GOT
YOU. DON'T WORRY...

...NO...
DON'T...

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